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New York

President: Mr. Erdös ..... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 64 to 84 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

Ms. Rivero (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the countries members of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and of Bolivia and Chile on the question of general and complete disarmament. The Political Declaration of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile as a Zone of Peace reflects the excellent friendship among the countries of our subregion and sets out a forward-looking programme to strengthen ties among them. Our countries have also set up bilateral consultative machinery with a view to the adoption of further subregional and hemisphere-wide measures to build stability, peace and democracy in the zone.

Over the past year we have continued to strengthen the machinery for consultation and cooperation on ongoing security and defence issues, thus encouraging their continuing development. By the same token, on the regional level, the general framework of our relationship has been marked by progress towards the adoption of measures to build confidence and to consolidate cooperation and integration in this sphere. For instance, we have established a common mechanism for registering buyers and sellers of small arms and have set up joint demining activities and bilateral meetings of Ministers of Defence.

Here, the MERCOSUR countries, Bolivia and Chile recognize that the increased incidence of violence is among the gravest problems affecting our societies, and are determined to develop new policies involving additional measures to combat that problem, both individually and through joint action. They have agreed to regulate more strictly access to and carrying of firearms, to bolster programmes of education for peace and tolerance, and to develop cooperation with the mass media in order to avoid the promotion and dissemination of a culture of violence.

Under that policy, MERCOSUR Governments decided during the past year to establish a group to study harmonizing our respective countries' legislation on firearms and ammunition, to intensify cooperation to better regulate trade in such items, and to promote coordinated action on this issue in international forums.

We are committed to supporting the full entry into force and the improvement of instruments and machinery on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. This was reflected in our statement on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in which we also declared our commitment to do everything necessary to ensure the universality of the Treaty and

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full compliance with it so that it can attain its ultimate objective: a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Our ongoing promotion of cooperation towards the exclusively safe and peaceful uses of nuclear energy was once again seen at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, when we said that the MERCOSUR countries, Bolivia and Chile believe that nuclear activities for peaceful purposes must be undertaken on the basis of transparency and in compliance with internationally acceptable norms of nuclear safety and of the physical protection of nuclear materials. We consider that the use of nuclear energy in our region must be intimately entwined with the adoption and implementation of appropriate security measures to bolster the trustworthiness and environmental friendliness of nuclear power. That would bring about greater acceptance among our peoples.

At the regional level, our commitment to the non-proliferation of chemical and biological weapons was reflected in the Declaration of Mendoza, which was signed on 5 September 1991 by Argentina, Brazil and Chile; Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay too have endorsed the Declaration. By that instrument, our countries are committed not to develop, stockpile or use chemical or biological arms, and to become original parties to the Convention on Chemical Weapons.

The countries of our subregion continue resolutely to make strides towards making MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile a zone free of landmines, and towards extending that zone throughout the western hemisphere. With the ratification of the Ottawa Convention by Chile and Uruguay this year, all six of our countries have now ratified that instrument. Moreover, a regional seminar on the destruction of anti-personnel landmines was held at Buenos Aires on 6 and 7 November 2000, organized by Argentina and Canada, and with the involvement of the Organization of American States (OAS). The seminar was a major step forward on the road towards the implementation of article 4 of the Ottawa Convention. We can say today that the countries of our region are complying with the deadlines for destruction set by the Convention, including the establishment of our own timetables in line with our own particular conditions.

We once again reaffirm our commitment to expanding and making systematic the information we provide to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and to setting up uniform methodology for reporting on military expenditures. In that vein, we reiterate our endorsement of the recommendations set out in the 2000 report (A/55/281) of the Group of Governmental Experts with respect to the functioning of the Register and its future development. We look forward to endorsement of the work undertaken by Argentina and Chile in the context of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on a standardized common methodology for the measurement of defence expenditures. We also note with particular interest the initiative taken by Chile and Peru towards the same end, and express the hope that this methodology can be used by other countries of the region. These unique commitments, together with the transparency that we offer the world in their implementation and the confidence created by our close defence-related ties, give us much authority to share our experiences with the international community.

In conclusion, we have only to reiterate our commitment to continue making further strides towards attaining the goals set by the declaration of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile, as a zone of peace, so that in the near future we can say with satisfaction that we have fully attained the goals we have set.

Mr. Bakhit (Sudan) (*spoke in French*): As Chairman of the African Group for the month of October, I have the honour of introducing draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.29, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa". Created in 1986 at the express request of the heads of State and Government of Africa, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa has the mission of providing the African countries, at their request and in cooperation with the Organization for African Unity (OAU), working support for the initiatives that they take and for other efforts to promote peace, arms limitation and disarmament in the region. It coordinates regional activities undertaken in Africa within the framework of the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme.

As is clear from the report of the Secretary-General, the revitalization process of the Regional Centre, started in 1998, has led to an increase in

activities, which at the same time have become diversified in order to take into account the new challenges that the States of the continent must meet, in particular in the areas of promoting peace, arms limitation and disarmament. It is also clear that despite the growing importance of these activities, the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa is still experiencing serious financial difficulties. The voluntary contributions are not sufficient to cover its operational and administrative expenses.

Because of this situation, draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.29 has undergone changes in relation to the document adopted on this issue last year. Reaffirming the General Assembly's strong support for the revitalization of the Regional Centre, the draft resolution emphasizes the need to provide it with the necessary resources to enable it to strengthen its activities and carry out its programmes, while appealing once again to all States, as well as to international governmental and non-governmental organizations and the foundations, to make voluntary contributions in order to strengthen the programmes and activities of the Regional Centre and facilitate their implementation. It also requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide it with the necessary support for better achievements and results.

Finally, it welcomes the results of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and appeals in particular to the Regional Centre, in cooperation with the OAU, regional and subregional organizations and the African States, to take steps to promote the consistent implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

I would like to conclude by expressing the hope that this draft resolution will enjoy the broadest possible support in the First Committee, in view of the importance of this matter for Africa.

Mr. Moungara-Moussotsi (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Since this is the first time in the course of our work that my delegation has made a statement, I am pleased to congratulate you warmly, Mr. Chairman, on your well-deserved election to lead the work of this Committee. My delegation very much appreciates the tact and skill with which you are conducting the discussions since the start of our work. We assure you of our continued support, and also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his preliminary remarks at the beginning of our work, which have enriched our discussion.

Like the delegations that spoke during the general debate, in which, unfortunately, we were unable to take part, I would like to reaffirm my country's strong condemnation of the base criminal acts of which the United States was victim on 11 September 2001, in which several thousand innocent people were suddenly torn away from their families.

Now I would like to turn to the subject under discussion, draft resolution A/56/C.1/L.2, on regional confidence-building measures and the work of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. I would like to thank my friend the Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mr. Atoki Ileka, for his very able introduction of the draft resolution, of which my country is a sponsor.

We all understand the salutary effects of confidence-building measures in a given subregion or region in terms of maintaining a climate of peace and security, which are indispensable factors for peaceful development. Confidence-building measures make it possible to reduce tensions and suspicions, especially among neighbourly States, and to work together in order to find mutually beneficial solutions.

In Central Africa, the leaders of our subregion have well understood this and initiated and established a number of concrete measures by creating mechanisms for political and military consultation, such as the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa which includes a Central African multinational force and an early warning mechanism for Central Africa.

We should also emphasize that periodic meetings take place between neighbouring countries of the subregion, either at the political level or at the level of experts, in particular at the level of officers of security forces, in order to develop strategies of coordinated struggle against such threats to security as large-scale banditry and illegal traffic in small arms. Nor should we fail to note the non-aggression pact among all States of the subregion.

All these actions can be attributed as much to the vision of the heads of States of Central Africa as to the

valuable support given by the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which coordinates peace and security efforts. That is why we would like to express our appreciation to the Department for Disarmament Affairs, of which the Standing Advisory Committee is a part, for its strong and steady support for the establishment of strategies for peace and security in Central Africa.

In conclusion, I appeal once again to the States Members of the United Nations to make additional contributions to the special fund in order to allow the Advisory Committee to establish and finance its programme of work, which is so vital to peace and security in Central Africa. The support of all delegations for draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.2 would be a step in that direction.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): It is my honour to present to this Committee, on behalf of the 116 sponsors, the well-known annual draft resolution on transparency in armaments, contained in document A/C.1/56/L.40. I will refrain from reading the entire list of sponsors, given the time constraints, but it is already as long as last year's and we expect more countries to sponsor this year.

Transparency in armaments is one of the major confidence-building principles among States which enables the international community to be better informed about military matters and developments. Transparency in armaments thus diminishes misperceptions and helps to prevent information from getting distorted.

To increase transparency in conventional weapons, however, only instruments with limited scope of application are available. Some are limited to certain very specific types of conventional weapons; others apply only in certain regions. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Ottawa Convention, for example, deal with selected types of weapons, while the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe deals with a specific region. The Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions is an important example of a regional arrangement that addresses specific types of conventional weapons.

These regional initiatives and arrangements on conventional armaments underpin the important contribution that regional organizations can make to transparency in armaments, but we also have two important instruments that complement the regional initiatives and arrangements at the global level. They are the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms, which reports on national arms transfers and holdings on a voluntary basis, and the United Nations standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures.

Both instruments have developed steadily over the years. Increased participation by States demonstrates the growing confidence that transparency can also help prevent the excessive accumulation of arms by encouraging self-restraint in military production and transfer of arms, help ease tensions and strengthen regional and international peace and security. We therefore believe that the international community should continue improving and further develop the Register, both in terms of participation and in terms of scope of reporting. The Group of Experts to be reconvened in 2003 will give us such an opportunity.

The growing confidence in the Register is evident from the upward trend in reporting: 109 Governments have submitted returns for the latest calendar year of 2000, with some late submissions still expected to come. This is by far the highest level of participation recorded for any year since the Register was established in 1992. The previous highest level was last year, for which 99 Governments submitted returns.

I would like to congratulate in particular those countries, which participated in the Register for the first time this year: Botswana, Nauru, Palau, Suriname, Togo, Tonga and Tuvalu. As a result of their submissions, the number of countries that have participated in the Register at least once now exceeds 155. I would like to encourage them to continue their participation in the coming years. Echoing the appeal made earlier by Belgium on behalf of the States members of the European Union, I would also urge those countries that have submitted a report only once or a few times to participate on a consistent basis. Consistency would significantly raise the level of participation and thereby the quality and significance of this confidence-building measure. Participation includes so-called nil reports, which confirm that no transfers took place in the calendar year.

As a practical point, I would also remind Governments that have not already done so to provide information regarding their national point of contact to

the Secretariat in order to facilitate the timely submission of data and its accurate compilation by the Secretariat. This is also an appropriate moment once again to express our sincere appreciation to the Secretariat and the Department for Disarmament Affairs for their efforts in compiling and publishing the Register and assisting Member States with the submission of their reporting.

The Register has thus become reasonably well established. It has established a de facto norm of transparency in armaments, which Governments must take into account. It provides a significant amount of information officially reported by Governments, which otherwise would not have been available. This information provides a legitimate basis for regional and interregional consultations between Governments. The Register also performs an important role in public information, promoting accountability of political and military leaderships. The Register also has stimulated many Governments to improve their national systems for monitoring and controlling arms transfers. Finally, the Register has set an example for new regional initiatives, such as the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions, to which I referred earlier in my statement.

Next year will complete 10 years of the operation of the Register and I believe it would be appropriate to mark the tenth anniversary during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

Notwithstanding all the good news this year on the United Nations Register, we are still far from true universal participation in the instrument. In this context, it is important to note that the concept of transparency in armaments is certainly not restricted to conventional armaments. The desirability of transparency applies as much to weapons of mass destruction as it does to conventional weapons. Multilateral treaties related to weapons of mass destruction are there and provide for their own mechanisms to ensure transparency in weapons of mass destruction.

We are encouraged by the constructive dialogue that we have developed with those countries that are not yet in a position to participate in the Register and cannot yet give their support to this draft resolution. We will continue to work with them. Let me once again assure the Committee that the Netherlands will continue to work actively to promote greater transparency in the field of weapons of mass destruction.

I therefore sincerely hope that this Committee will continue to give widespread support to the draft resolution on transparency in armaments in general, and to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms in particular, by adopting the draft resolution with as near a consensus as possible.

Mr. Heinsberg (Germany): As I am taking the floor for the first time this session, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship. My delegation is delighted to see you in the chair, and, through you, we would like to congratulate your country, the Republic of Hungary. I assure you of the full support of my delegation as you guide our work to what I hope will be a successful conclusion.

I have the pleasure to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.42, presented by Germany and Romania — my Romanian colleague will speak later — entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures".

Let me begin with some general remarks on the operational side of this draft resolution, which has close links with the draft resolution introduced by the Netherlands on the Register of Conventional Arms under the common umbrella title, "Transparency in armaments", which Ambassador Sanders has just introduced, and which Germany fully supports.

Significant progress was recorded this year with regard to the level of participation by Governments in the two global arms transparency instruments maintained and operated by the United Nations Secretariat: the Register of Conventional Arms and the standardized instrument for reporting of military expenditures, which were based on draft resolutions submitted, respectively, by the Netherlands and by Germany and Romania. Encouragingly, the number of new participants in the two arms transparency instruments continues to grow, and has registered a significant increase over the past two years.

As a result of a promising increase, a record number of submissions by Governments have been recorded for the United Nations standardized instrument for reporting of military expenditures. This year the Secretariat received submissions from 60 Governments, as compared with only 34 last year. I

would like to mention the Governments of Kiribati, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, San Marino and Vanuatu, which participated in the United Nations military expenditure instrument for the first time, making a submission in 2001. The standardized reporting format covers expenditure on personnel; operations and maintenance; procurement and construction; and research and development.

So far more than 90 Governments have participated in the military expenditure instrument at least once. These Governments together are responsible for about 80 per cent of global military expenditure.

A sustained effort is being made by the Secretariat to increase familiarity with the procedures of these instruments, with a view to encouraging greater and more consistent participation. A series of regional and subregional workshops, with the assistance of interested Governments, is also planned for later this year and for early 2002 for Latin America and western and southern Africa, together with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Netherlands and Canada. These efforts will help to enhance and sustain the progress of global transparency instruments towards fulfilling their respective confidence-building and arms-restraint objectives.

This year's version of the draft resolution presented biennially by Germany and Romania is a follow-up to the 1999 version. It has been slightly reshaped in both the preambular and operative parts in the interests of better readability and easier understanding of the logical flow of statements and recommendations. It now includes a new preambular paragraph on its political importance with regard to conflict prevention. It also encourages Member States that have no information to provide to submit nil returns. Participation could thereby be further increased towards the goal of universalization.

I appeal to all countries that have not yet participated to join the instrument by submitting information this year. I also appeal to those that have participated only once, or just a few times, to participate on a consistent basis. Consistency alone will significantly raise the level of participation each year.

With regard to two important administrative details, the Secretariat has asked me to convey to you, Mr. Chairman, two points. First, in order to facilitate the timely submission of data and its compilation by the Secretariat, participating Governments are requested to provide information to the Secretariat on their national point of contact. Secondly, to avoid errors and expedite the compilation of data, participating Governments are also requested, where possible, to make their annual submission by electronic means, in addition to the normal practice of sending or faxing their data in hard copy.

I take this opportunity to thank all those delegations which have actively contributed to the further development of our draft resolution during the past three weeks. Finally, I thank those nations which have for the first time sponsored our draft resolution this year and thereby inscribed themselves on the already impressive list of sponsors to date: Armenia, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Georgia, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Iceland, Lesotho, Mali, Nicaragua, the Niger, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Thailand, Tonga and Ukraine.

I express the hope that the draft resolution will again be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Niculescu (Romania): It is a pleasure for me to see you, Mr. Chairman, presiding over this important Committee of the General Assembly. You have our full support and cooperation.

The representative of Germany, Ambassador Volker Heinsberg, to whom I express my deep gratitude, has just ably and convincingly introduced draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.42, entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures".

As a traditional co-author of the draft resolution on this subject, Romania attaches great importance to this issue and further believes that increasing transparency in the military field will enable us to achieve increased confidence among the Members of the United Nations.

Recent experience in various regions of the world, including in South-eastern Europe, make clear the significance of the confidence-building process as an important and essential prerequisite for the building and maintenance of regional and international peace and stability.

We believe that a better flow of objective military information would be one way of strengthening the confidence-building process. Furthermore, such a flow would ease regional and international tensions as well

as prevent any misunderstandings or miscalculations that might lead to irreversible changes, which, unfortunately, could create precedents.

The Romanian Government reaffirms its conviction that the implementation of the United Nations standardized reporting system would be a step towards reducing tensions regionally and worldwide. Increased transparency in the area of military budgets and increased openness in military affairs would enhance confidence among the States Members of the United Nations, thereby providing an opportunity to reduce the risk of military confrontation.

We are pleased to underline the fact that, in the last two years, an increasing number of Member States have provided information to be included in the standardized reporting system.

I should like to thank the German delegation for its excellent work on this question and all sponsors of the draft resolution for their support. The Romanian delegation joins Ambassador Heinsberg's appeal for consensus.

Finally, it is a well-known fact that Romania has on several occasions reiterated its commitment to promoting transparency and confidence-building, both globally and in a regional context. That is why my delegation co-sponsored the draft resolution just submitted to us by Ambassador Sanders of the Netherlands on transparency in armaments, contained in document A/C.1/56/L.40.

Mr. Fils-Aimé (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States has endeavoured to avoid being caught up in the arms race. It was able to limit the number of local conflicts aggravated by cold-war competition by taking a responsible and independent attitude in favour of nuclear disarmament as well as disarmament in the area of conventional arms.

With the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, Latin America and the Caribbean became one of the first inhabited regions to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

In the current disarmament context, we welcome the active participation of the Group's members in all forums and mechanisms aimed at total nuclear disarmament — a goal that must be achieved in order to safeguard humankind.

At the same time, we share the concerns of the large number of countries that are concerned about the lack of progress in general disarmament and in particular in the area of nuclear disarmament. We are also aware that the security problems we are facing have their own specific characteristics. We are still threatened by conflicts that often are fuelled by poverty and marginalization, and we are not totally isolated from global tensions.

From this perspective, our region, without ignoring the high priority that must be accorded to the process of disarmament and in particular nuclear disarmament, attaches great importance, inter alia, to negotiations on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which is has close links with its socio-economic problems and with its security.

The activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean reflect the preoccupations of our region and are focused on increasing awareness of the relationship between security and development.

We welcome the General Assembly's decision to revitalize the Regional Centre. Today — two years after that decision was taken — the Centre has relaunched its activities and it is working on a broad range of issues related to the concept of peace.

Given the consensus on this draft resolution, which has so many positive implications, my delegation is very pleased to submit draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.46 in its capacity as Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. We are confident that this draft will once again receive the support of the General Assembly.

With the Centre revitalized, the Department for Disarmament Affairs has made one of its units available to us. The Centre has the mandate, inter alia, to help Member States in their multilateral negotiations for disarmament; in their deliberations on the adoption of rules and agreements; and in the promotion of transparency in military matters and confidence-building measures — that is to say, it emphasizes the regional approach to disarmament in all its aspects.

We believe that this mandate is very appropriate and that the region will benefit enormously from it. We recognize the innovative initiatives launched by the Centre, on the one hand, by emphasizing the link

between development and agreements on nuclear disarmament, and, on the other, by helping to disseminate information among Member States of the region. All of this, of course, will contribute to increasing the number of countries acceding to disarmament agreements.

The draft resolution also encourages the Regional Centre to continue to provide support and assistance in all issues related to disarmament, including the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

We believe that the Centre's programme will accurately reflect our positions and will make it possible for us not only to create a common concept of regional security but also to develop a common policy as regards global security and development problems.

Mr. Flores (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will be making reference to the introduction of the draft resolution on the new United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

As my colleague from Haiti stated, the Regional Centre, based in Lima, is distinguished by the fact that it carries out its activities in the first inhabited region of the world to be free from nuclear weapons — a region with very specific security problems, in which conflicts are often exacerbated by poverty and marginalization. The revitalization of the Regional Centre has become a reality, and the results of the many different activities it carries out make this clear.

In less than three years of work, the Centre has brought together more than 500 diplomats, law-enforcement officials, members of Parliament and representatives of civil society businesspeople in a variety of seminars and working groups on disarmament issues. By the end of this year, more than 140 police and customs officers will have participated in joint information seminars organized in concert with the Organization of American States on regulations and models for imports, exports and arms in transit, and a variety of related processes.

During the first half of 2002, over 70 police and customs officers will be trained for fighting the illicit trade in weapons and munitions.

With respect to landmines, the Centre has observed and verified the elimination of over 300,000 landmines, giving greater credibility to disarmament initiatives in the region. With respect to nuclear weapons, the Centre's parliamentary information panel has provided parliaments in our region with useful information on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and verification systems, and advised on the Treaty's potential developments. The Centre has contributed in practical ways to the process of ratification in a number of countries in our region.

Finally, the Centre has focused on identifying opportunities for coordination with other regional and subregional organizations and signed a memorandum of understanding with the Organization of American States (OAS) to work on the issue of firearms. Four such agreements are now under discussion with other organizations. These new initiatives will provide the Centre with a better mechanism for complementing rather than duplicating activities carried out by other organizations. The Centre is clearly entering a new phase in the strengthening of peace, disarmament and the promotion of social and economic development in our region.

However, we still need support for the Centre's efforts from countries around our region, which can propose items for inclusion on the Centre's agenda and make voluntary contributions towards the Centre's programme of activities. The concern and active involvement of member country delegates in the elaboration of this draft resolution are a clear sign of the interest that the Centre's activities have awakened in the countries of our region. The draft resolution is the result of agreement among us all and demonstrates the firm commitment we all share in continuing to support the Centre and making it an effective tool for disarmament, peace and development in our region.

Mr. Maandi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I have the pleasure of introducing to the Committee the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.37, entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region", on behalf of the following sponsors: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritania, Monaco, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Yugoslavia.

The yearly introduction of this draft resolution by the group of sponsors proves, if proof were needed, the interest that the countries of the Mediterranean basin and Europe attach to making a haven for peace, security and cooperation of our region, where the virtues of the exchanges between peoples have most often and best been expressed since the beginning of history.

The countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region are convinced of their common destiny as a community of immense, complementary resources and are committed to a dialogue that continues to be strengthened by an increasing number of joint initiatives to promote a coherent, interdependent whole.

The Barcelona Conference of 1995 was a demonstration of the new-found vision of the Euro-Mediterranean region as a whole. The Conference undeniably marked the recognition of the historically rich nature of Euro-Mediterranean relations and of the need to work together, using a global, concerted approach, to lay the foundations for a mutually advantageous partnership responding equitably to the needs of peoples in the region.

The various ministerial meetings held later and other forums for dialogue and consultation promoted the construction of the kind of Euro-Mediterranean region that we all desire: one that is stable and prosperous.

The draft resolution submitted for the consideration of the Committee is no different from resolution 55/38, adopted in the previous session of the Assembly. It continues to be based on factors aimed at strengthening security and cooperation in the Mediterranean.

With respect to the preamble, the draft resolution recalls the totality of initiatives taken by Mediterranean countries to strengthen peace, security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region and reaffirms the primary role of those countries in reaching that objective. It also reaffirms the responsibility of all States to contribute to the stability and prosperity of the Mediterranean region and their commitment to respecting the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the provisions of the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Furthermore, the draft resolution reaffirms the indivisible character of security in the Mediterranean and notes that peace negotiations in the Middle East should be of a comprehensive nature and represent an appropriate framework for the peaceful settlement of contentious issues in the region.

Operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution reaffirms the fundamental principles providing the foundation for the efforts made by Mediterranean countries to eliminate all causes of tension in the region and to find just, peaceful and lasting solutions to persistent problems in the region. Operative paragraph 4 reaffirms the conviction that the elimination of the economic and social disparities linked to inequality of development, as well as the promotion of mutual respect and greater understanding between cultures in the Mediterranean basin, will serve to reinforce peace, security and cooperation between countries in the region.

With respect to disarmament, operative paragraph 5 calls on regional States that have not yet done so to ratify all multilaterally negotiated legal instruments related to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Operative paragraph 6 encourages all States to strengthen their confidence-building measures and promote openness and transparency.

As well, operative paragraph 7 encourages all Mediterranean States to further strengthen their cooperation in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, taking into account the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, organized crime, illicit arms transfers and drug production and trafficking, which pose a serious threat to peace, stability and the friendly relations between States, hinder international cooperation, and lead to the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms and to the destruction of the democratic foundations of a pluralist society.

As in past sessions, the sponsors are confident that the draft resolution will receive the valuable support of all members of the Committee and be adopted without a vote.

Organization of work

The Chairman: We have exhausted our list of speakers for today. As I mentioned last Friday, we will begin the third phase of our work — action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under agenda items 64 to 84 — in the afternoon of Tuesday, 30 October, instead of on 31 October.

In this connection, I again draw the attention of the Committee to the Chairman's paper, document A/C.1/56/CRP.3, which is a clustering paper. As I stressed earlier, I intend — with the Committee's cooperation, clearly — to take each cluster successively, one after the other, beginning with the draft resolutions contained in cluster 1, entitled "Nuclear weapons".

At the same time, the Chair will take into consideration other factors as well in planning our work. I would very much like to be able to count on the Committee's cooperation and assistance to enable us to conclude the work of the Committee as early as possible. If a delegation or delegations have compelling reasons to request that consideration of a particular draft resolution in a cluster should be postponed, I would appreciate it if those concerned informed the secretariat as early as possible, in order to allow it and the Chair to plan our work accordingly.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to inform the Committee of additional sponsors of draft resolutions, as follows. A/C.1/56/L.7: Belarus, Bhutan, Sierra Leone and Togo. A/C.1/56/L.12: Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone. A/C.1/56/L.14, A/C.1/56/L.24 and A/C.1/56/L.34: Togo. A/C.1/56/L.30: Luxembourg. A/C.1/56/L.39: Niger. A/C.1/56/L.40: the Republic of Korea and Togo. A/C.1/56/L.42: Sierra Leone. A/C.1/56/L.43: the Republic of Korea and Togo. A/C.1/56/L.45: Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guinea and Nauru. A/C.1/56/L.47: Algeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iceland, Niger, the Republic of Korea, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Kingdom. A/C.1/56/L.50: India, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Korea and Tajikistan. A/C.1/56/L.51: Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritania, the Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo.

The Chairman: I remind the Committee that the meeting in the morning of next Tuesday, 30 October, will be the last of the second phase. There are 11 speakers on the list of speakers for that morning. I urge the sponsors of those draft resolutions that have not yet been introduced to kindly introduce them in the morning of Tuesday, 30 October.

I would also like to inform the Committee that it is my intention to adjourn the afternoon meeting on Wednesday, 31 October, at 5 p.m. so that the ceremony of presentation of the 2001 United Nations Disarmament Fellowship certificates can take place between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Mr. Dahan (France) (*spoke in French*): You have just told the Committee, Mr. Chairman, that tomorrow afternoon we will begin the third phase of our work — voting on draft resolutions. You have also said that, following tradition, you intend to proceed cluster by cluster. Has a list of the draft resolutions that we will vote on tomorrow afternoon been compiled? I believe that in previous years we had 24 hours' notice of the draft resolutions that we were to take action on. Is it possible to have a list of the draft resolutions on which you intend to have the Committee vote tomorrow?

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): The Committee has been given document A/C.1/56/CRP.3, in which all the draft resolutions and decisions under the heading "Nuclear weapons" are listed, from A/C.1/56/L.1 to A/C.1/56/L.48. We will proceed on that basis when we start the third phase of our work. Does that answer the question of the representative of France?

Mr. Dahan (France) (*spoke in French*): Coming from you, Mr. Chairman, that is, of course, by its nature, a satisfactory response. But, to be more precise, I wonder whether all the draft resolutions under that heading will be ready for a vote. That was the point of my question.

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): The Secretary of the Committee has just informed me that all draft resolutions are ready and available to delegations. All the draft resolutions have been introduced, and we will therefore have no difficulty in putting them to a vote.

Mr. Dahan (France) (*spoke in French*): You have fully answered my question, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Antonov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I support my French colleague in principle. In previous years we have had the opportunity to prepare very thoroughly for the vote on all draft resolutions. I would like to inform you officially, Mr. Chairman, that we intend to submit an amended draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.1 but not before tomorrow, and therefore we will not be ready to put that draft resolution to a vote tomorrow. I think we would be able to put it to a vote at the earliest 24 hours after the introduction of our amendment. Therefore, I would like to ask you, Mr. Chairman, to take this into account and not put draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.1 to a vote tomorrow.

The Chairman: This is one manifestation of a compelling reason why a delegation asks for postponement of action on a given draft resolution. We will certainly be heeding this request of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Noburu (Japan): The reason I ask for the floor is the same as that of the Russian delegation. We, the Japanese delegation, have proposed draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.35, entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons". We are now in the process of submitting A/C.1/56/L.35/Rev.1. We will do it either late tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. Therefore, we would also like to request at least 24 hours, and maybe more. Even though the vote on the first cluster may be over within a few days, we may wish to postpone the vote on our particular draft resolution until the end of this week or early next week.

Mr. Chindawongse (Thailand): I apologize for taking up the Committee's time. My intervention regards document A/C.1/56/L.42. I would like to thank the Ambassador of Germany very much for his very kind remarks in introducing the draft resolution, of which we are proud to be a sponsor. I would also like to express thanks for his kind remark that this is the first time that Thailand is co-sponsoring this draft resolution. But, merely to set the record straight, we have always supported this draft resolution and have co-sponsored it in the past.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt): As the French delegation requested earlier, my delegation would like to do what has been done in previous years. I think that in previous years the Secretariat presented a list of draft resolutions ready for action under Cluster 1. I believe that not only will the draft resolutions introduced by Japan and the Russian Federation not be ready for action tomorrow, but there are other draft resolutions under Cluster 1 that are not ready. If possible, perhaps the Secretariat could present us now with the list of draft resolutions that are ready for action tomorrow.

The Chairman: Let me say this. We have document A/C.1/56/CRP.3, which lists all the draft resolutions introduced under the heading of nuclear weapons. At the same time, we work in a moving context. The reason why I drew the attention of delegations to "compelling reasons" is to allow us to proceed while fully aware of the evolving situation. This is why I asked delegations to inform the Secretariat, as early as possible, if they have such compelling reasons, so that we can plan our work. What is happening today as we speak is precisely this scenario. We heard a statement made by the representative of the Russian Federation and we heard another statement made by the representative of Japan, explaining why those delegations wish to postpone discussion of certain draft resolutions. Unless we hear specific requests for postponement, the Secretariat is confined to the list we have in document A/C.1/56/CRP.3.

So, unless any delegation wishes to let us know of difficulties or other compelling reasons for postponement, we will proceed according to document A/C.1/56/CRP.3. But I have mentioned more than once that the Chair will be as flexible as possible because we are all interested in a happy conclusion of our work. Therefore, I ask all the delegations again that might be interested in this kind of postponement to let us know precisely what draft resolutions they have in mind, and we will certainly act in accordance with the full understanding of a given situation.

Mr. Bakhit (Sudan): The African Group is still discussing and consulting on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.9, "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty". Taking this information into account, I will appreciate it if the Secretariat will also take note of that and give us some time to finish our consultations with interested delegations.

The Chairman: We will certainly take into account the request of the representative of the Sudan, and we will proceed accordingly. This is very important precisely because we are going to proceed to the third phase and we have to know how we can go ahead, on the basis of document A/C.1/56/CRP.3, with

the departures that might be necessary as we proceed to actions to be taken on all the draft resolutions.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt): With regard to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.25, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", my delegation is still conducting consultations with other delegations, so the draft resolution will not be ready for action tomorrow.

The Chairman: We heard four delegations asking for specific exceptions that will be granted by the Chair, but I would like again to draw delegates' attention to A/C.1/56/CRP.3, which is the yardstick according to which we will be proceeding in phase III.

Mr. Reimaa (Finland): We do not have any draft resolutions to be introduced or put into action, but, Mr. Chairman, you have referred to the cluster on nuclear weapons. Is it your intention, if time allows, to proceed to the clusters following the nuclear weapons one? I think that question is perhaps still in the air.

The Chairman: As I said earlier, we will try to spare as much time as possible for our work, so if we exhaust a given realm of possibilities, obviously bearing in mind eventual postponements, we will proceed to the next cluster. We will not stop. We will not disperse. We will try to utilize our time as efficiently as possible, and when the time is ripe, we will get back to those draft resolutions that were subject to postponement.

Mr. Borrie (New Zealand): Mr. Chairman, similarly to those who have already spoken, my delegation would beg your indulgence, for we need further time to consult on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) decision that is contained in A/C.1/56/L.10. We will not be a position for a decision tomorrow.

Mr. Vassallo (Malta): Mr. Chairman, in view of the interventions of a number of delegations this evening, I wonder if you would consider reverting to a practice of the First Committee whereby the Secretariat would, during the third stage of our discussions, publish a daily list of those draft resolutions that are ready to be taken up. We understand very clearly that you would like to practice discipline and stick to Conference Paper 3. Nevertheless, as difficult as it is for you to deal with a moving situation, it is rather difficult for us to have instructions on all draft resolutions at every moment, especially if we are going to be moving between one cluster and another. Again, just like my colleague, I would beg your indulgence on this matter.

The Chairman: After listening to a number of statements from delegations, what we can do at this point in time is to read out those draft resolutions that will come up for action tomorrow afternoon. The Secretary of the Committee will now read out the document symbols of those draft resolutions upon which we are ready to take action.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): This afternoon the Secretariat tried to reach the sponsors of the draft resolutions listed in clusters 1 and 2. We have been able to ascertain that the following draft resolutions are ready for action tomorrow: A/C.1/56/L.5, L.12, L.13, L.14, L.17, L.26, L.31, L.45 and L.48 in cluster 1. In cluster 2: A/C.1.56/L.32, L.33 and L.7.

The Chairman: The last three documents, those related to cluster 2 on other weapons of mass destruction are obviously subject to the evolution of discussions in cluster 1. Basically, we are talking here about cluster 1 — nuclear weapons — and then, time permitting, we might proceed further.

Again, let me remind members of the Committee that the last meeting of the second phase will be held tomorrow morning, Tuesday, 30 October, at 10 a.m. in Conference Room 4.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.